



Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products Disposal - Fact Sheet

Pharmaceuticals and personal care products include the following: prescription and over-the-counter drugs, veterinary drugs, fragrances, cosmetics, sunscreen, and vitamins. Many of these items have traditionally been disposed of by flushing down the toilet or drain. Although this method of disposal prevents accidental ingestion, these substances can be difficult to treat and may pass through to the environment, which may cause adverse effects to fish and other aquatic life.

To prevent possible adverse effects to the environment from pharmaceuticals and personal care products, please practice the following guidelines:

Do

- Reduce pharmaceutical waste whenever possible.
 - Buy only as much over-the-counter medicine as can reasonably be used before the expiration date.
- Take advantage of PA's Prescription Drug Take-Back Program.
 - To learn more about the drug take-back program and to find a drop-off site in your area, please visit this link provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs:
http://www.ddap.pa.gov/Prevention/Pages/Drug_Take_Back.aspx.
- If no disposal instructions are given on the prescription drug label and no take-back program is available in your area, dispose of pharmaceuticals in your household trash by:
 - Taking your drugs out of their original containers.
 - Mixing drugs with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds.
 - Putting the mixture into a disposal container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag.
 - Concealing or removing any personal information, including Rx number, on the empty container by covering it with black permanent marker or by scratching it off.
- Dispose of personal care products by placing them in the trash.

Do Not

- Flush drugs or personal care products down the toilet or drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs you to do so.
- Burn pharmaceuticals or personal care products in a burn barrel. Uncontrolled burning can create dioxins and other air pollutants.

